



Equine Trails Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Lansing, Michigan

ROLL CALL

Present for the Equine Trails Subcommittee (ETS):

- Amy Scharmen-Burgdorf, Chair
- Jenny Cook, Vice Chair
- Anna Lee
- Brandy Miller
- Dug Jordan (virtual)
- Sam Norman (virtual)

Present for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR):

- Tim Novak
- Anna Centofanti
- Sage Hegdal
- Blake Gingrich
- Jill Sell
- Greg Kinser
- Dave Merk
- Nicole Hunt
- Carly Graff
- Paige Perry
- Heather Durocher
- Earl Flegler
- Scott Slavin
- Peter Costa
- Nick Edington (USFS)
- Spring Rosales (USFS)

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting called to order by the chair at 1:04 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion made to approve the May 13, 2025 draft minutes made by Jenny Cook and seconded by Brandy Miller. With all in favor, motion carried.

Motion to add items to the Sept. 10 agenda made by Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf and seconded by Jenny Cook. With all in favor, motion carried.

— Add under updates, item e; Ebike Committee Update.

Motion to approve the Sept. 10 modified agenda by Brandy Miller and seconded by Jenny Cook. With all in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT (limited to 3 minutes)

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Right to Ride – Hopkins Creek

Nicole Hunt, DNR

Chris Stark, DNR, will be meeting later this week with Department staff discussing the legislative affairs for additional guidance on placement for signs. Parks and Recreation do not want to restrict access in this area. Nicole will share the outcome of the legislative meeting later this week with committee members.

Nonmotorized Signage Recommendation

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Report provided to committee members and DNR staff.

Tim Novak, DNR, commented that this type of research and recommendation helps the Department understand what the nonmotorized trail signage needs are and defining them as indicated in the report. This is the type of work the Department would like to see the advisory work groups provide and the Department appreciates all the time and effort by the committee members and DNR staff who assisted with this recommendation.

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf suggested modifying the report:

- Under section 3.5; Motorized Trail Etiquette for Meeting Equestrians add bullet point to read: remove helmet if you notice the horse is having trouble/issues.

Motion to support the report as written and including Amy's suggestion to move forward to the Michigan Trails Advisory Council (MTAC) for review and their support is made by Brandy Miller and seconded by Dug Jordan. With all in favor, motion carried.

NONMOTORIZED MAINTENANCE & FUNDING SURVEY RESULTS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

Sage Hegdal, DNR

Presentation

PATHWAY STRUCTURES AND REROUTES VERSUS REPAIR

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Bridges and boardwalks need repair on equestrian trails, especially state forest pathways. Equestrians would like the thought and consideration of making these structure repairs horse safe when planning for these projects.

Greg Kinser mentioned the load (weight) rating is a large factor in the initial design and planning. It is recommended that equestrians work with regional trail specialists and park supervisors and/or managers to discuss the projects. Information to be captured and identified prior to these discussions is; where can equestrians currently ride but do not because of structural needs or is there a high and dry reroute that can be considered.

UPDATES

Regional Reports provided by committee members:

- Upper Peninsula, Sam Norman
- Southwest Lower Peninsula, Jenny Cook
- Southeast Lower Peninsula, Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf
- Central Lower Peninsula, Brandy Miller
- Statewide Tourism, Anna Lee

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Scott Pratt, DNR

Capital Outlay funds have not been approved because the state budget has not yet passed.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER – HORSE SIMULATOR EXHIBIT

Scott Pratt, DNR

No progress to report due to the funds has not been approved because the state budget has not yet passed.

TRAIL CLOSURE POLICY

Nicole Hunt, DNR

Nicole is working on a draft policy to share with the committee for review and feedback.

TRAIL ETIQUETTE/EBIKE SIGNAGE

Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf

Amy shared a document with the committee and DNR staff documenting areas initially not identified for signage. The document will be sent to regional trail coordinators and trail specialists.

EBIKE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Tim Novak, DNR

The Ebike Subcommittee is made up of both trail advisory board members and DNR staff. Since June 2024, when the one-year trial period for the ebike Land Use Order (LUOD) was signed by the Director, approximately 200 ebike permits were issued for class 2 ebikes for mobility reasons. The ebike subcommittee met yesterday and discussed use of class 2 ebikes on state managed trails for recreational use. The Department suggested opening the trails to class 2 for recreational use eliminating the need to obtain a permit and the ebike committee was not in support and would like to gather more information before making a decision to support.

Tim would like the ebike subcommittee and the DNR signage committee to meet and discuss creating signage focused on ebikes and etiquette. Also, Tim would like Marketing and Outreach to be involved in the education awareness piece.

Amy would like an opportunity to add equestrian representation to the ebike subcommittee.

Anna Lee commented from a funding standpoint, the Department should explore the option of trail users purchasing a permit sticker for ebikes, similar to snow and ORV permits.

Is the ETS committee in support to open the trails to class 2 ebike for recreational use without obtaining a permit. The ETS committee, as a whole, is in support of leaving the ebike LUOD (June 2024) as is NOT in support of opening trails to class 2 ebikes without a permit.

PRINTED MEDIA (PURE MI)

Heather Durocher, DNR

Heather will explore printed media options for equestrian trails and update with more information at the next ETS meeting in November.

NORTHER MICHIGAN ICE STORM UPDATE

Greg Kinser, DNR

The [DNR Public Northern Ice Storm](#) page was shared.

Greg reported that crews are making good progress, out of over 3000 miles of trails that were impacted, there are approximately 590 miles of trails left to clear. DNR staff and trail partners/sponsors/volunteers are working hard and in hopes to have all trails cleared by December 1, 2025.

Spring Rosales, USFS - W.U.P

Courtney Lake, there is approximately 14 miles of trail and trail head multiyear expansion in process to replace the water system and include equestrian family friendly sites and improved water access.

Nick Edington, USFS

Mio District is working on trail clearing from ice storm, which has been a slow process due to no extra funding. Lucerne boardwalk is complete.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.